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Russia—Present and Future

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RUSSIA is reaping the whirlwind. For generations her autocrats and bureaucrats, her priests and teachers, her professional men and merchant princes have sowed the wind. Clothed with responsibilities, endowed with power, and faced with opportunities such as rarely fall to the lot of any leaders, they stupidly chose to dig a pit of selfishness. Blinded with their own conceits they overreached themselves, and plunged down headlong dragging their people with them. In all the hellish misery of the present hour in Russia, one hears from their lips no word of contrition and no plea for forgiveness. The Almighty may have mercy upon them, but in Russia they are already numbered among the damned.

CZARISM AND BOLSHEVISM

Bolshevism is the whirlwind; it is the offspring of czarism, but not more hideous either in principle or in method. Conceived in utter selfishness and in basest materialism it carries within its own bosom the seeds of its destruction. Like the parent tyranny from which it sprang, it is without conscience and without a god. "We are frankly anti-Christian," announced the head of the Bolshevik Bureau of Social Welfare to a representative of the Y. M. C. A.; to which the faith of a Christian replies, "Then you will fail."

Czarism has passed away; it was not truly Russian either in its spirit or in its working. It was founded on the sand; under the storm and flood of war it fell, and great has been the fall of it. Bolshevism, its child, also builds on the sands of class-rule, hatred, strife, jealousy and selfishness. It mocks international obligations and revels in intrigue. With audacious impertinence it seeks to override existing democracies and voices its claim to

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world dominion. One cannot imagine the consummation of its program, even in Russia. Any social structure which is to endure in Russia, must be founded upon the enduring rock of good in the character and the past experience of the Russian people.

THE RUSSIAN CHARACTER

One who has been through the agony of the past two years with Russians can realize how deep are the strata of love, forgiveness, patience and meekness; how universal the common sense and humor; how strong the mental fibre; how glowing the desire for knowledge; how wonderful the already developed capacity for coöperative effort; how rich the simple culture; how reverent and noble and genuine the religious life of this great people. No lust of conquest or imperial ambitions motivate them. The average Russian believes in the golden rule as a practical proposition. His fine idealism and rugged good sense will ultimately turn to confusion the counsel both of hypocritical bourgeoisie and demagogic bolshevist. It is in the faith that neither of these pretenders to authoritative speech voices the real mind and will of Russia, that one can view her present plight without despair or even trepidation, and look to her future with confidence and assurance.

One is not unmindful of the present woes and horrors which have overtaken this long-suffering people. Would that it were possible to blot from memory some of the unutterable infamies which have been perpetrated by both sides in this terrible civil war! Only too well known are the embittered ruthlessness and calculated terrors of the bolshevist program, both in its conception and in its execution. These men had good teachers. On the other hand are the arrogant, swaggering, imperialistic militarists, the record of whose deeds will make even the Prussian jealous when the scalpel of history bares it to the world. And what shall one say of those who follow in their wake, the soulless, vulturous creatures, who from their emigré havens outside of Russia have been calling upon the world to rescue their prey for them! Neither side in the Russian civil war has a monopoly of coup d'états, Chinese mercenaries and Machiavellian principles and methods. The great majority of the Russian people quite wisely prefer to endure stoically the pains of the present rather than cast in their

lot with either of the principal groups aspiring for power, for neither group knows what it is to respect public opinion, to have regard for ordered liberty, to love international morality, or to recognize the principles and practices of democracy. It is quite easy, entertaining and popular to paint the lurid and the outrageous. One may indulge in this pastime exclusively, may remain wholly faithful to the facts in every instance related, and with the mass of accumulated evidence may continue such portrayal almost indefinitely. Yet such a portrayal would not truly represent normal conditions in Russia today. As in the case of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, granted that every detail related could be substantiated, yet the aggregate impression conveyed is wrong. The dislocation in life, industry and transport is severe. The sufferings endured are often intense, but there is no such uninterrupted carnival of blood and crime, no such wallow of corruption, as the more picturesque reports would have one believe. There is less of disorder and suffering in bolshevik Russia, and less of stability in non-bolshevik Russia, than is generally indicated. Allowing for the effects of the war, the masses of the Russian people know little more of oppression today than they have known in generations past. Large sections of the country are comparatively quiet. The impairment of former conditions of life has not come quickly. The disruption of normal life began in 1914, and affairs have grown progressively worse from then till now. Individual and social adjustments have to some extent kept pace with misfortune and there has been no sudden or overwhelming collapse. The nearest approach to it followed the demobilization of the army. The only explanations for Russia's survival of that supreme test are found in prohibition, the average man's good sense, the faithfulness of the railway employes, and the wide distribution of the shock.

THE EFFECT OF THE EUROPEAN WAR

I entered Russia before the bolshevik revolution. The country had been three years at war. It had already been gutted as by fire. Vast areas had been swept over by the contending forces. Man-power, industry, financial stability and transport had been sacrificed to the terrible demands of the struggle with Germany. Twenty million men had been mobilized for the armies, and the

armies had suffered nine million casualties including prisoners. Agriculture, the principal industry, had suffered no less than manufacture. Roubles were selling for five cents in Vladivostok, and you can buy them no cheaper today. Bank credits were grossly over extended through war loans and speculative activities. The vice-president of the Zemsky Soiuz informed me in November, 1917, that the productive capacity of his organization—a fair example—in the Moscow district had fallen from 40 to 60 per cent during the preceding year. Trains were running from three days to a week late on the Trans-Siberian. The morale of the army was gone, and many competent observers, British, French, Belgian, and Czech soldiers, who had been fighting with the army, testify that there was little chance for the restoration of that morale after the disasters in the fall of 1916.

Russia was already prostrate when swept by the revolution. She was prostrate not only because of the corrupt and incapable leadership to which her destinies had been committed; not only because of her military defeats and economic insufficiency; but prostrate because her masses in their ignorance did not comprehend the significance of the conflict. If Russia was already prostrate in 1917, what has transpired since then may be viewed in the nature of a misdirected protest; a protest which aggravates rather than betters the misfortunes against which it is directed, but which can be greatly overestimated in its importance.

The person who fastens his attention upon the disasters of the war, or gives way to undue concern regarding bolshevism or attaches his hopes to the success of the Siberian, North Russian and other ostensible champions of constitutional government, will certainly fail in any just approximation of the future of Russia. These may all affect, but they will not determine, that future. There is so much bolshevism in anti-bolshevik Russia and so much anti-bolshevism in bolshevik Russia that the fate of the momentous issues at stake in Russia cannot possibly be decided by mere changes in battle lines or even by the rise and fall of temporary antagonists for power. The situation is far more baffling in its complexities; far more astounding in its contradictions; and far less susceptible of analysis or even intelligent observation than the majority of foreigners, who have been there, like to admit. The wise student of Russia's future will rather

seek to ascertain and study the great underlying currents of Russian life and thought. He will seek out the fundamental and substantial elements of former social organization and practice and the individual virtues that are universally recognized as significant in the lives and destinies of peoples who seek to be free.

THE FUTURE

The fundamental present facts which in my opinion have permanent bearing on Russia's future are:

1. Russia is rich in her natural resources, so wondrously rich that the average American literally has no conception of the tremendous possibilities of the great Slavic domain. Natural resources of this character are vital. Upon them national life may draw for its recuperation, if the will and the determination to recover are present. It is, therefore, to the characteristics of the Russian people and to their social institutions that one must address himself if he is to know whether Russia *will* recover.

2. The true Russian spirit is tolerant, democratic, spontaneous and unspoiled, if one may judge by the soldiers and the peasants. Wanting much in self-discipline and the spirit of compromise yet they knew not arrogance nor false pride, nor was there in them any servility; they were free men. One of them in the rapture of his freedom expressed it thus, "I have known what it is to be free. To have had one day of the revolution is better than all my previous existence."

3. The Russian temper is radical in its attitude toward political, social and economic problems. It is definitely intended that the old order shall not continue in the new nation which the people aspire to build. For example, in all of my travels in Russia, I did not meet with a single Russian who wished to see American social and economic civilization reproduced in his country. It is upon the vision of a better social order that the bolshevist régime has built up its power, but no one who knows the radicalism of the average Russian can for a moment believe that his conception of the better social order will permanently admit of the substitution of a new tyranny in place of the old.

Moreover, if Russia appears radical from our point of view, we should bear in mind that she may not be so radical from her own standpoint. Private property has never enjoyed the recog-

nition in Russia which it has in America and in western Europe. If in the working out of their social vision, the Russian people choose to modify still further the recognition which it has heretofore had, it will be but the confirmation of a tendency long since established.

4. Russia is rich in social experience as well as in natural resources, democratic in spirit and radical in temper. In his bitter struggle for a better world, the peasant has learned the value of coöperative enterprise. The coöperative buying, selling and banking organizations of Russia and Siberia are among the great institutions developed in former years. Except in a very limited sense, these great coöperatives have restricted themselves to buying and selling and banking, but it will be surprising indeed if the economic rehabilitation of Russia in manufacturing and mining does not come about through the application of the coöperative principles already well established. I see no other method of economic readjustment that is in keeping with the social views of the masses and the practical problems involved.

5. The Russian people are poor in education. Yet I have never been any other place where the intellectual hunger is as keen and insatiable as it is in Russia. To think that this desire for knowledge has been the object of much of the repression and oppression which the Russian people have undergone! One of the great and crying needs of Russia today, one which all substantial elements of the population seem unanimous in their desire to realize, is education. Sad as it is to witness the levelling down of the institutions of higher learning in Russia, it is but a part of the retribution which has swept in upon the privileged classes. The Universities of Moscow and Petrograd and similar institutions may have been demoted from their high calling, but they are being definitely related to the most immediate and pressing educational needs of the Russian people.

6. Russia has genuine unity, cultural, political, economic, and religious. After admitting the present potency of the separatist and disruptive forces which are at work, one must still face the great underlying unity of culture. A common medium of speech and a universal body of literature, song, art and custom continue. These create a desire for political unity. Many Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Siberians and even Poles have privately recognized

the ultimate necessity of a federal union of the component parts of what was formerly the Russian empire. A separatist movement in Siberia in 1918 received no substantial support. The economic interests of the various sections of the old empire are already knit together in a fashion so plain and substantial that the separatist tendencies which are present have before them an exceedingly difficult struggle if they are to prevail. The cultural, political and economic unity is reinforced by a spiritual unity which obtains throughout Great Russia, Ukraine and Siberia, and which has planted its roots deeply in the furthestmost corners of the old empire. It is a force—manifested chiefly in the Orthodox church—which is under a cloud today, but which is potent in its capacity for future influence upon the destinies of Russia. Finally there is geographical unity. As I travelled over Russia and Siberia, I was frequently reminded of the Honorable James Bryce's dictum in regard to our own Mississippi Valley—it was meant to be the home of one people. The geographical unity has been emphasized by a remarkable system of river, railway and canal transportation, which strengthens at every point the other elements of unity. I cannot believe that the forces of unity and integration have been more than temporarily suspended by the conditions which now obtain.

7. In its governmental institutions, one must bear in mind that Russia has had a minimum of political experience with democracy; that it is without trusted political leaders, without tried and proven popular institutions of government and without the stabilizing influence of political traditions.

It is not altogether clear to me that the village mir or the Zemstvos or the Duma, either municipal or national, are to endure. It is very doubtful if they command popular confidence and support. My own impressions are that they do not now do so. The soviet, on the other hand, has gathered around it the loyalty and enthusiasm of the revolutionary movement, and has the honor of having saved the social and economic character of the revolutionary movement. It has innumerable defects. But its constitution is still in the formative state and is undergoing rapid modifications. The great importance of the soviet lies in the fact that it is the only political institution in which the Russian people seem to have confidence. The average Russian peasant,

or the workingman, has little trust or interest even in a Constituent Assembly; he will tell you his fear that though he were in a majority he could not control it because of his political inexperience. In the soviet, on the other hand, he believes he can ultimately make his point and maintain it. He will admit that it may be perverted and often has been, but will deny that such perversion can be long or continuously maintained. In this confidence which the masses of the population have in the soviet and in its own capacity for rapid change and development lie the possibilities of its future. My impression is that it must be reckoned with in any consideration of the future of Russia.

In conclusion, let me suggest a few of the things which it seems to me we may confidently expect to come out of Russia's present struggle.

1. The rehabilitation of the Russian state on some federative basis, which will include the Balkan provinces, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Siberia, but will almost certainly exclude Poland and Finland.

2. The application of state ownership and control to transportation, education, certain banking and financial functions, and welfare work.

3. A coöperative rural and industrial economy, based upon past experiences and prevailing ideals.

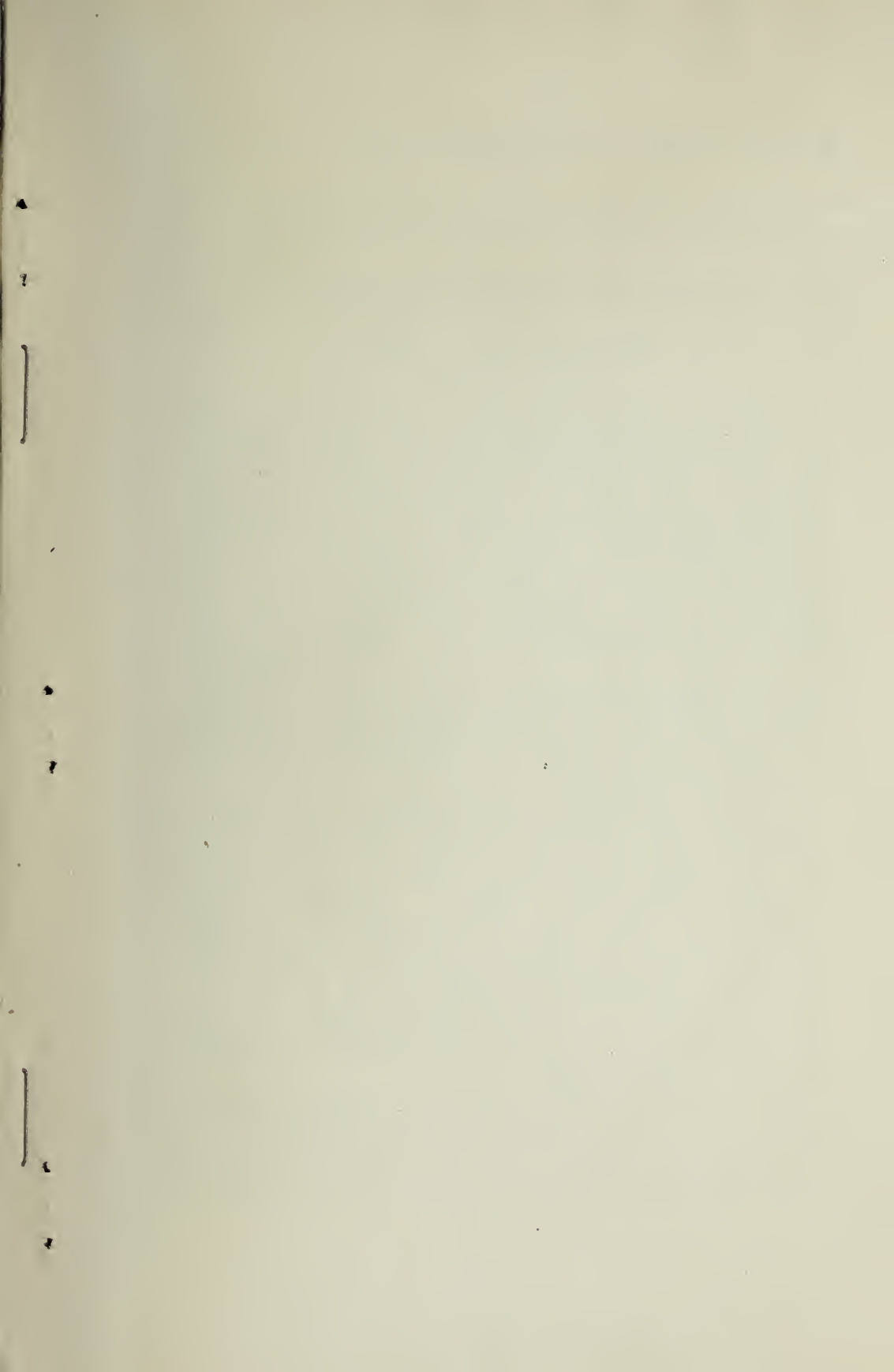
4. Considerable latitude for private initiative and corporate activity. The field for such developments, however, will be limited as compared with what today exists in the United States.

5. The definite abandonment of militaristic and imperialistic programs of the past and of the wild radicalism of the present; a wholehearted committal to international peace, to the intensive development of the native character, culture, institutions and resources.

6. There are yet many long years of civil war and strife ahead of Russia. It will not be surprising if revolution follows revolution, so wide spread is the unrest, so inadequate the leadership, and so poor are the facilities for effective expression of public opinion. Yet, despite this unhappy prospect, one who has been in Russia and has come to know her people can hardly doubt her future. If it is impossible to explain Russia, if it is beyond us even to understand and comprehend her, one can yet have faith in

her. And it is a remarkable fact that those of my associates who have known Russia longest trust her most.

For Americans who have such faith, there is open the privilege of an unselfish and sympathetic assistance to a people who need help and who welcome and appreciate it when rendered. There can be no sure method of helping Russia that is not founded on the law of love and mutual respect. The soul of the new Russia will spurn any other.



FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICS

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Observations on Soviet Government. Over a year and a half has passed since soviet government was declared in Russia. That is not a long period of time in the history of a great revolutionary movement. Developments which loom large during these years and which impress even thoughtful men and women may prove to be of little consequence in the final determination of things, while the still small voices which are often unheard and usually unheeded by contemporaries swell into the chorus of decisive opinion which settles the course of affairs. It is a matter for trepidation, therefore, when one ventures to search mid the political and institutional debris for the foundation stones upon which a new democracy is to rest, or to attempt to appraise the undried, rough-hewn timbers hastily thrown into the erection of a temporary political superstructure. Only the hope that the tentative observations of one who was there may assist others to interpret this titanic movement justifies the present note.

There were soviets in Russia before the Bolshevik uprising in November, 1917. Similar organizations had appeared during the course of the 1905 revolution. At first they took form in the ranks of organized labor. The laboring masses of Russia constituted the most fertile soil for revolutionary and socialistic propaganda. The laborer was usually of peasant origin. He had come to the city in search of better things. Perhaps he had been driven from the village by the increase of population or by the inequitable distribution of land. The conditions of industrial toil and life were so bad that exploitation such as no other white men now know was the common lot. Housing conditions that came under personal observation recall the worst descriptions from English and American industrial history.

To the industrial workers their council or soviet quickly became the symbol of their newly won political freedom and the assurance of social and economic reconstruction. It was a short step from distrust of the conservative revolutionary forces and the old political institutions with

their bureaucratic machinery to the cry "All power to the soviets," an appeal emblazoned on thousands of banners and voiced by millions of toilers.

The councils of workmen, soldiers and peasants never lost sight of the basic fact that the revolution was social and economic. All of the social revolutionary groups came to regard the councils or soviets as the real defenders of the revolution. The establishment of soviets was therefore promoted with feverish haste during the early months of the revolution and was even fostered by Kerensky himself. Nor was this task particularly difficult except in its scope. In many places the councils had long been hidden in the recesses created by the necessity of evading the vigilance of the old régime. They took on a new life and strength at the first evidence of freedom from old restraints. The organization and development of some hundreds of soviets is one of the amazing feats of the first six months of the revolution. Between March and November, 1917, the institutional basis of state power in Russia was radically altered. Yet the substantial character of the soviet as the source of power has surprised its friends and confounded its enemies, domestic and foreign.

In the early months of the revolution many efforts were made by learned students to explain the essential democracy of local and provincial institutions such as the village mir and the zemstvo. Indeed they were cited as the evidence that Russia was and had been democratic in spirit even under Tsarism. They would be cornerstones in the new state edifice and would bear the strain of the transition from autocracy to democracy. How could tried, worthy, and venerable agencies such as these be ignored? Yet today neither the village mir nor the zemstvo offer hope for reconstruction. They do not even give evidence of life. In European Russia the zemstvos have been liquidated and in Siberia where they were never strong or indigenous, they have voluntarily sought to disappear. The mir has been supplanted largely by the soviet.

It may be too early to accept the fate of the mir and the zemstvo as final. Their present condition may be one of dormancy. But it would be folly to close one's mind to the fact that the great majority of Russians are quite willing to effect a rather complete break with the past. Although the zemstvo and the mir served important social and economic purposes prior to the revolution, they have not survived as organs for the important business now at hand.

In the case of the mir there are two views which seem tenable at the present time, and with the data that can now be obtained it is too early

to decide between them. According to the first the soviet is substantially an outgrowth of the mir. It represents the natural and logical expansion of the mir when the latter was called upon to assume the larger governmental functions entailed by revolution and popular government. In favor of this view there is little data, but it is difficult otherwise to explain the sudden and overwhelming victory of the soviet in local affairs.

The other view and one which has considerable to substantiate it is that among large and important groups of the population there existed a positive distrust of the former agencies of government. This attitude was particularly characteristic of the industrial workers and the soldiers. The former in their reaction from industrial oppression demanded proletarian control of industry, and as there was no former organ of government devised for this purpose, the effort was made to adapt the soviet to industrial organization and administration, an undertaking which has thus far proved beyond its capacity. On the other hand, among the rural population the village mir had been performing certain communal functions for many generations. It is true, however, that its prerogatives had been increasingly subjected to official interference and there could be no confidence that it would be able to meet the new order. Moreover the returning soldiers had become familiar with the soviet as an effective instrument. Most of the men who were demobilized were peasants and quite naturally they took the soviet home with them. The village mir machinery was found inadequate to care for the problem of distributing the land, especially in cases of dispute between villagers. Intervillage warfare frequently arose and the adjustment of rival claims was beyond the mir. It was a task calling for imagination, courage, accommodation and new administrative machinery. Soviet authority and organization were welcome to the distracted yet peacefully disposed peasant. Moreover this authority not only effected the negotiations and made the adjustments incident to land distribution, but also gave assurance that it would permanently support the settlements effected. To the land hungry peasant and his family the soviet quickly supplanted the mir as an object of fealty and regard.

As for the zemstvo, it was from the first suspected of being an institution that was bourgeois both in its conception and management. It did not and could not command the confidence of the masses because it did not possess that of its own employees. It was early made the object of attack and its business operations in soviet Russia finally liquidated.

The foregoing explanations of the rise of the soviet and the fall of the

mir and the zemstvo may prove to be inadequate in the light of more complete information. But in the main they harmonize with the fact that the Russian revolution is primarily a social and economic movement, and that political institutions can endure only if they give expression to the social and economic forces at work. Failure to recognize the true character of the revolution and efforts to restrain revolutionary developments within purely political lines have helped bring the Allies to their present unhappy relations with Russia and have contributed not a little to the present misfortunes of her people. The attentions of ill-advised and self-seeking friends and allies may be altogether as embarrassing to a people in disaster and distress as the blows of a known enemy.

From the first the soviet caught the fancy and devotion of the masses. In its simpler forms it is not unlike a mass meeting and in the earlier days its procedure was elastic and membership was open to all citizens within respective economic groups. Opportunity was offered for all voices that so desired to be heard, even though the time given was brief—two, three or five minutes—and the length of time given was the decision of the meeting, not the ruling of a committee or officer. Men spoke to men who would understand. The superior learning and prestige of the professional man or the stilted oratory of the politician, or the awesome presence of the man of affairs did not intrude. Brickmaker spoke to brickmaker, textile worker to textile worker, store clerk to store clerk. The repressed and pent up grievances, beliefs, aspirations of tens of thousands found expression in words. In company with men who lived as they lived, who knew and appreciated the common hopes, they chose delegates from among themselves who were to speak for them in the higher councils of the city and the nation. Moreover the verdict as to policy was never closed. It was always open to readjustment in accord with new and subsequent expressions of opinion. Delegates could be recalled at will.

From the very first the fluid form of the soviet constitution proved one of the sources of its strength. The tremendous momentum attained by the revolutionary current as it swept over and through the old levees of custom, destroying the institutional walls of centuries, tearing apart the social structure and wrecking its machinery, and cutting new channels through old barriers, was relieved only through the soviets. In them was reposed the confidence of the masses, so far as confidence remained in any organ of government. Whatever measure of deliberation, of restraint, of direction, characterized public affairs, scanty as these evidences

of self-government often appeared to the observer, must be credited to the soviets. For without them Russia would have been plunged into the anarchy of despair. The new wine could not be contained in the old bottles. The soviet very often failed, but its successes were not inconspicuous.

One view into the workings of this newly found organ of the masses will throw light upon its widespread popularity. The room is one that is commodious and capable of seating four or five hundred people. It gives evidence of having seen better days. Probably it has been requisitioned for its present use. At one end is a platform with a few chairs on it. Individual chairs are massed in the center, and there is plenty of standing room at the sides of the hall and at the rear. The meeting begins about seven-thirty and the hall is well filled ahead of time, sometimes crowded. Voting is done by acclamation. A chairman is selected, unless one has previously been selected and has time yet to serve. The country is wanting peace, bread and land. These men, in particular, desire peace and bread. The discussion covers many subjects, but the peace discussions at Brest-Litovsk are getting a hearing. Germany is showing her teeth, and the vision of a peace without annexations and without indemnities is not so bright as it had been. Yet the land must have peace. Without it there can be no bread. Even their beloved revolution may be lost. Many speakers are heard, most of them favoring peace even on the harshest terms laid down by the enemy. All of the speeches are expressions of opinion by common folk. Eloquence of surpassing quality breaks forth from the most unlooked for sources. One listens to a rough moujik, a common soldier who had been two years at the front, and had been decorated for bravery. Hear the wonderful description with which he introduces himself: "I come from a place where men dig their own graves and call them trenches," and then followed a burst of impassioned speech, telling of hardship, want, treachery and slaughter. It closed with a demand from the soldiers that the government seek peace. No government could long endure which neglected that demand. The soviet was the channel through which that demand was voiced and made effective.

The soviet was seriously handicapped because of failure to appreciate its constitution and the limitations thereby imposed. Such appreciation was almost equally lacking in its friends and in its foes. Legislative, executive, and judicial functions frequently have been confused. Relations with superior soviet authorities have been in-

sufficiently defined or have been ignored. "All power to the soviets" has too frequently been taken seriously by local bodies. Small wonder that confusion and mistakes and perversions have occurred—with what frequency and serious consequences only the future historian can reveal.

Despite these conditions the soviets have shown remarkable tenacity, capacity for adjustment, and adaptability. In the first place, they have made the masses feel themselves politically effective. The fact that this effectiveness has come about through a virtual abdication of certain normal prerogatives does not substantially alter the case. The abdication has the merit of being largely voluntary. The party in power had the advantages of definite objectives, cohesive organization, and capable and acknowledged leadership. Having captured the government it has operated it without regard to its own or its opponents theories. The necessity of carrying out the party program has determined the means. The position and power of the chief commissar in Russia has been actually as strong as that of an American president during war, perhaps stronger. His commands are effective wherever the arm of the soviet extends. The word of the Tsar was never more authoritative. For the moment the party in power may even resort to the suppression of minorities in the soviet—but there is no reason to believe such suppression has been serious enough to menace the existence or popularity of the institution.

There is far more smoke than fire in the protests over the suppression of the constituent assembly and the exclusion of the bourgeois elements from the soviets. Ninety-three per cent of the Russian people have something at stake in the success of the soviet form of government. Under the old régime they had practically nothing. To such people the fine points of the law, their own convenience, and perhaps their new found rights are temporarily unimportant if counter-revolution appears to menace the one institution in which they have confidence and which they believe they can ultimately control. They can endure much. They are accustomed to it. And they are wasting little time or thought over the misery and wailings of their former oppressors. Despite executive usurpation, legislative perversion, and the substitution of inquisition and terrorism for judicial procedure, the soviet has continued in the affections of the masses.

On the other hand the weaknesses of soviet government have been overshadowed by its importance as the defender of the revolution. There has been no quarter given in the battle between socialism and

capitalism. Wanton violations of soviet principles have been serious. In order to gain time and the appearance of unity, the ruthless suppression of minorities and every immorality known to statecraft has been employed. On reflection one is reminded, however, that new principles in government are seldom established by tea party methods unless they are of the Boston type. The radical nature of the revolutionary objectives has made the struggle a desperate one. For the soviet to be subordinated to the ends of the party in power is only what one might expect. Constitutional tradition is not old in Russia. The peril of foreign war and intervention has not contributed strength to the forces of tolerance and moderation.

It is important to distinguish between the soviet as an institution of government and the political party which is temporarily in power. In principle the soviet admits of more than one political party, recognizes the probability of party struggle for its organization and control, and finds its own effectiveness and development chiefly under party direction. For the present the Bolshevik party may dominate the soviet, may pervert it as parties often do with political institutions, and may even seek to direct and determine its constitution and development. Nevertheless the soviet is very far from being a strictly Bolshevik preserve, and it is because it is difficult of control that the Bolsheviks have resorted to desperate measures to continue their supremacy. It is not improbable that the Bolshevik party has greater reason to fear its removal from power through the soviets than through outside agencies. The soviet offers such immediate, effective and constant opportunity for party change that no party which lacks a program, cohesive organization, a reasonable degree of popular support, and experienced, skilled and farsighted leadership can hope long to control it. There is and can be no assured tenure of party control so long as the soviet as an institution continues to function.

Reduced to its simplest terms the soviet is an institution which seeks to promote government of workers, by workers, and for workers. Workers include all who toil. Work is declared a universal duty through the adoption of the motto: "He shall not eat who does not work." A serious attempt is made to reduce the undue premium which capitalism has placed upon brains or capital in contrast with brawn. The soviet state seeks to relate government, including all the major activities, to the individual on the basis of his position in society as an economic unit. Politics becomes business and business becomes politics. Soviet government is the recognized agent for the direction and the development of coöperative and communistic activity.

Many technical criticisms of the soviet constitution are possible. Some of its defects seem fatal: the diffusion and decentralization of power among the many component parts of the state; the absence of approximate boundaries between the central and local organs of government; the apparently impossible position of the executive amid extraordinary responsibilities for the social welfare; the council of people's commissars, the colleges of the people's commissariats, the ever present Central Executive Committee, the semi-annual All-Russian Congress, and the ever impending recall; the emasculation of all legislative stability through the constant power of recall vested in all local and provincial soviets over their delegates; and the calculated disfranchisement of rural workers in favor of industrial toilers. In addition, merely passable operation under the soviet constitution would require the development of party organization and discipline to a degree where the real power of the party could over-ride the constitution at will. The present party in power in Russia is charged with doing this very thing.

There are many more defects that might be mentioned, but it is too early for critical analysis. The real test of soviet government will be whether or not it works. Manifestly its constitution has not assumed final form. The instrument which has been promulgated is more of a propaganda document than a national constitution. It is the child of necessity, growing from the suppression of the constituent assembly and the desire and the demand for constitutional sanction of soviet conduct. The constitution may therefore be considered as a more or less idealized picture of soviet government at the moment it was issued, but it cannot be assumed to be a true picture of soviet government then or now, or of the stabilized soviet constitution, assuming that the institution will survive the revolution.

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